(ii) Production Sharing Contracts are in operation in 70 blocks offered under the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) and in 23 pre-NELP blocks.

(iii) Exploration in new areas, especially in deepwater and difficult frontier areas, as also exploration in the deeper layers of the producing fields.

(iv) Faster development of newly discovered fields and stepping up of use of new technologies for seismic surveys, workover, simulation operations, drilling of wells, etc., in producing areas.

(c) and (d) Seismic surveys are being conducted by the National Oil Companies namely, ONGC and Oil India Ltd. (OIL) as well as Private Companies/Joint Ventures in their allotted areas located in the States of Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Tripura, and Uttar Pradesh as also in the offshore areas.

The Seismic survey data, after processing and interpretation, provide information only about the presence of structures/leads and prospects. Presence or otherwise of hydrocarbons is known only after exploratory drilling.

Decontrol of gas price

2278. SHRI RAVULACHANDRASEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to decontrol subsidized gas price;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the impact of it on power (electricity) and fertilizer industries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Natural Gas prices were last revised in September, 1997 arid the prices were to be reviewed and revised before April, 2000. However, prices have not been revised and the same pricing regime continues. It has been envisaged to decontrol the gas prices in future.

(c) The impact of the proposed increase on power (electricity) and fertilizer industries will not be significant.